

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 23, 2005. Claims 1 to 49, 52 to 65, 68 to 80, 83 to 96, 99 to 111, 114 to 127 and 130 to 137 remain pending in the application, with Claims 50, 51, 66, 67, 81, 82, 97, 98, 112, 113, 128 and 129 having been cancelled. Claims 1, 14, 26, 39, 54, 70, 85, 101 and 116 are the independent claims herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 7, 8 to 10, 14, 17, 20 to 22, 26, 29, 32 to 35, 39, 43, 49 to 51, 54, 59, 65 to 67, 70, 74, 80 to 82, 85, 90, 96 to 98, 101, 105, 111 to 113, 116, 121, 127 to 129 and 135 to 137 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,633,932 (Davis) in view of Japan 2000-305725 (Yoshimoto), Claims 2, 3, 6, 15, 16, 19, 27, 28, 31, 40 to 42, 44 to 46, 56 to 58, 60 to 62, 71 to 73, 75 to 77, 87 to 89, 91 to 93, 102 to 104, 106 to 108, 117 to 120, 122 to 124 and 132 to 134 were rejected under § 103(a) over Davis in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,757,741 (Hertling) and Yoshimoto, Claims 5, 13, 18, 25, 30, 38, 55, 86 and 117 were rejected under § 103(a) over Davis in view of Hertling and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,337,745 (Aiello), and Claims 11, 12, 23, 24, 36, 37, 47, 48, 52, 53, 63, 64, 68, 69, 78, 79, 83, 84, 94, 95, 99, 100, 109, 110, 114, 115, 125, 126, 130 and 131 were rejected under § 103(a) over Davis in view of Hertling and Aiello and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,581,092 (Motoyama) and Yoshimoto. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns obtaining control over a printing device. According to the invention, a user obtains control over the printing device's print capabilities or printing operations. Control may be obtained in any of various ways, but preferably includes some process by which the user is authenticated. Once control over the

printing device's print capabilities/printing operations has been obtained, print jobs/images that are not intended for the authenticated recipient are deferred from being printed out during a period in which the user has control. Put another way, until the user relinquishes control over the device's capabilities, print jobs received by the printer ahead of the user's job are deferred until the user relinquishes control. As a result, since the user has control over the device, he/she can perform any of various operations during the control period (e.g., send a facsimile, print out a received facsimile, perform a copying operation, print out pending print jobs intended for the recipient, or even send a new print job to the device, which is printed out ahead of other jobs since the user has control). In the meantime, other print jobs, etc. that are not intended for the recipient are deferred (i.e., not printed out) while the user maintains control or until the user relinquishes control.

Referring specifically to the claims, amended independent Claim 1 is a method for obtaining exclusive control of a printing device's print capabilities by a recipient to print data intended for the recipient, the method comprising the steps of authenticating the recipient, providing the recipient exclusive control of the printing device's print capabilities after the recipient has been authenticated, and temporarily deferring print data not intended for the recipient, which is input to the printing device prior to print data intended for the recipient, from being printed and printing print data intended for the recipient during a period in which the recipient has exclusive control of the printing device's print capabilities.

Amended independent Claims 14 and 26 are apparatus and computer-executable process steps claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 1.

Amended independent Claim 39 includes features along the lines of Claim 1, but is directed more specifically to a method of printing images on a printing device,

comprising the steps of providing a recipient which has been authenticated with control over printing operations of the printing device, and performing a process to print out an image, intended for the recipient which has been authenticated, by the printing device during a period of control over the printing device, wherein an image not intended for the recipient, which is input to the printing device prior to the image intended for the recipient, is deferred from being printed during the period of control over the printing device.

Amended independent Claims 70 and 101 are apparatus and computer-executable process steps claims, respectively, that roughly correspond to Claim 39.

Amended independent Claim 54 also includes features along the lines of Claim 1, but is more specifically directed to a method of controlling printing operations of a printing device, comprising the steps of providing a recipient who has been authenticated with control over the printing operations of the printing device, and maintaining control over the printing operations until control is manually relinquished by the recipient who has obtained control, wherein an image not intended for the recipient, which is input to the printing device before the recipient is provided with control over the printing operations of the printing device, is deferred from being printed until control is manually relinquished by the recipient.

Amended independent Claims 85 and 116 are apparatus and computer-executable process steps claims that roughly correspond to Claim 54.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 1, 14, 25, 39, 54, 70, 85, 101 and 116. More particularly, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of providing an authenticated recipient with exclusive control of a printing device's print capabilities, and deferring print data not intended for the recipient, which is input to the

printing device prior to print data intended for the recipient, from being printed and printing print data intended for the recipient during a period in which the recipient has exclusive control of the printing device's print capabilities.

Davis is seen to disclose that, upon receiving a print job, a print node determines whether a document of the print job is a sensitive document or not, and if so, stores the document in an internal buffer memory. To print the sensitive document, the user is authenticated at the printer, whereby the print node decrypts the document and the document is queued for printing. (See column 6, lines 33 to 48.) The fact that the decrypted document is queued is one significant distinction from the present invention.

In this regard, queuing a document merely provides for inserting the document into the print queue with other print jobs so that the job is printed out in turn. That is, Davis merely provides one advantage over conventional print job queuing techniques, in which jobs are queued upon receipt, by providing the ability to defer queuing of the job if it is a sensitive document until the user is authenticated at the printer. In other words, Davis merely provides a way to defer submitting a print job to a print queue for printing until such time as the recipient has been authenticated and is present at the printer to obtain the printed document. The fact that the user is authenticated at the printer in no way provides the user with exclusive control over the printer's printing capabilities, but rather, merely releases a locally stored sensitive document to the print queue for printing. Moreover, there is no disclosure in Davis that any print jobs already pending in the queue are deferred from being printed out, much less that the deferral continues for a period in which the user has exclusive control. Thus, Davis is clearly distinguishable from the present invention.

Turning now to Yoshimoto, it is seen to disclose providing the user with the ability to alter the order of print jobs in a print queue. A control unit provides the user with the ability to control the ordering of print jobs in the queue so that the user can either move a job up in the order, or down in the order. While the user is processing the request, jobs in the queue continue to be processed in turn until the user selects an OK button to change the queue order. When the user presses the OK button, the order of the jobs in the queue is changed based on the user's input, but otherwise, printing operations continue as normal. Thus, at best, the user is provided with the ability to control the order of jobs in the queue, but all other print capabilities of the printer remain under the control of the printer, including processing jobs in the queue that were input before the user's job. In other words, the user is not provided with exclusive control over the printer's printing capabilities, but is only provided with the ability to change the queue order. Moreover, the only "period of control" that the user is provided with is the instantaneous selection of the OK button to change the order, which merely results in changing the queue order. Therefore, it is simply not possible to defer printing of jobs input to the printer before the user's job "during a period in which the user has control over the printer's printing capabilities." Thus, Yoshimoto also does not disclose or suggest the features of the present invention.

The proposed combination of Davis and Yoshimoto also would not have resulted in the present invention. In this regard, the proposed combination would have, at best, provided the user of Davis with the ability to reorder their decrypted sensitive job in the queue after the job has been released and queued. Thus, the proposed combination fails to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of providing an authenticated recipient with exclusive control of a printing device's print capabilities, and deferring print data not

intended for the recipient, which is input to the printing device prior to print data intended for the recipient, from being printed and printing print data intended for the recipient during a period in which the recipient has exclusive control of the printing device's print capabilities.

The other applied references, namely Hertling, Aiello and Motoyama, have been studied but are not seen to add anything that, when combined with Davis and/or Yoshimoto, would have rendered the present invention obvious. Specifically, any permissible combination of Davis, Yoshimoto, Hertling, Aiello, and/or Motoyama would not have resulted in providing an authenticated recipient with exclusive control of a printing device's print capabilities, and deferring print data not intended for the recipient, which is input to the printing device prior to print data intended for the recipient, from being printed and printing print data intended for the recipient during a period in which the recipient has exclusive control of the printing device's print capabilities.

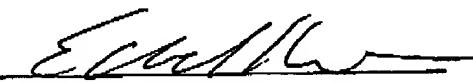
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, amended independent Claims 1, 14, 25, 39, 54, 70, 85, 101 and 116, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

As a formal matter, Applicants request that the Examiner provide Applicants with initialed Forms PTO-1449 indicating that the art cited in the September 22, 2003 and March 2, 2005 Information Disclosure Statements has been considered and made formally of record in the application.

No other matters having been raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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